

Full Committee Ranking Member Rep. Norm Dicks

May 9, 2012

-As Prepared For Delivery-

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the work you, Ranking Member Price and the subcommittee staff have done on this bill. An effort has clearly been made to accommodate many of the concerns of Members on the Democratic side, and I am grateful for that.

"I continue to be concerned about the outlook for this year's appropriations bills. This Committee's Fiscal Year 2013 allocation is based on the Ryan budget which reneges on the bipartisan Budget Control Act agreement that established \$1.047 trillion as the discretionary allocation. I worry about the effect that the Republican's proposed \$19 billion cut – most of which they would propose to cut from domestic discretionary spending accounts – will have on job growth and the nation's economic recovery.

"This bill provides a total of \$39.117 billion for Fiscal Year 2013. At this level, the bill fully funds front-line employees, such as Border Patrol agents and CBP officers, ICE agents, Secret Service, and Coast Guard.

"The bill increases funding for the state and local grant programs administered by FEMA by \$413 million above FY 2012, an amount that will help many states and localities that are struggling to meet public safety needs in the current economy.

"For other grants, the bill funds the Administration's request for the Emergency Management Performance Grants at \$350 million and firefighters at \$670 million, equally divided between SAFER and equipment grants. I am concerned that waivers that have allowed grants for firefighters to be used to retain and rehire their own trained and skilled personnel are not included in the bill. But, like last year, I am hopeful that we will be able to reinstate them for the

upcoming fiscal year.

"I am particularly pleased with the bill's funding for cybersecurity. Earlier this year, FBI Director Mueller warned that cyber attacks will soon become one of the biggest threats to America's safety, possibly surpassing the threat level posed by terrorism. I believe that the Director is absolutely correct, and I am happy to note that the bill increases funding for DHS's critical cybersecurity activities – including intrusion detection and continuous monitoring – by \$300 million over FY 2012. Within this amount is \$202 million, as requested, for DHS to assist other Federal agencies in enhancing their cybersecurity efforts. I worry that not enough is being done to secure Federal civilian networks, and it is imperative that DHS becomes a very strong leader in this regard.

"I am also glad the bill funds the President's request to begin the process of building a new polar icebreaker. The Coast Guard's High Latitude study completed in 2010 concluded that three heavy and three medium icebreakers are the minimum needed for the Coast Guard to fulfill its statutory missions. Currently, we have only one medium icebreaker, the Healy, in service with one heavy icebreaker, the Polar Star, expected to come back into service during the next fiscal year.

"So although I am pleased that the Department is beginning the process of designing a new icebreaker to replace the Polar Star when it leaves service, replacing one aging vessel does not get the Coast Guard any closer to having the assets it needs to accomplish its statutory mission. Obviously we will not fix this problem in this bill or even in this cycle; however I believe it is important to note to my colleagues that in the years ahead, this critical national security need will be an important and costly long-term issue for this subcommittee to address.

"I do take issue with some of the Majority's decisions with regard to Department Operations, which it funds at \$191.3 million below the request and \$71.3 million below FY 2012. I am particularly disappointed that this bill proposes to deny the pay raise for all Federal workers covered by the bill. Federal pay has been frozen for the last two years and denying Federal workers the very modest one-half of one percent increase proposed by President Obama will affect the recruitment and retention of quality personnel.

"Thank you Mr. Chairman. I look forward to working with you, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Price and the members of this Subcommittee to improve the bill as it moves forward."

